

Pregnant Women and Smoking – Louisiana

In Louisiana data on smoking during pregnancy is gathered through two sources; the State Center for Health Statistics (Vital Statistics) and the Louisiana Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Monitoring System (La PRAMS). Vital Statistics data is gathered through information reported on birth certificates. La PRAMS is a survey designed to identify and monitor selected maternal behaviors that occur before and during pregnancy and during a child's early infancy.

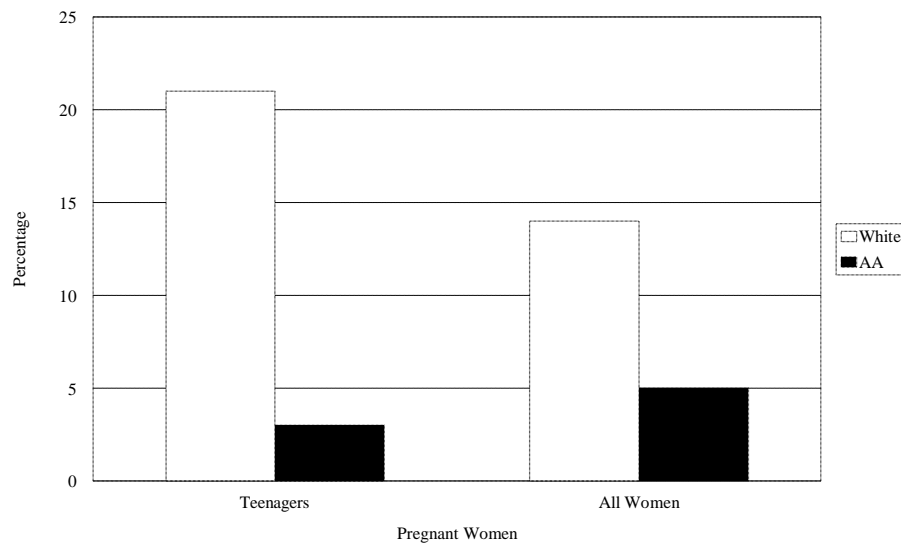
According to 1999 Vital Statistics Data, a total of 6722 (10.1%) pregnant women smoked during pregnancy. Overall smoking rates among pregnant women in Louisiana have decreased by 33% over the last decade mirroring similar declines across the rest of the nation. As seen in Figure I, White women (13.7%) in Louisiana were more likely to smoke during pregnancy compared to African American women (5.2%). While smoking among pregnant women overall has decreased, smoking among pregnant teenagers is increasing. As seen in Figure II, smoking rates have increased from 8.6% in 1994 to 10.6% in 1999. Furthermore a large racial disparity exists with one in five white teenagers (21.6%) smoking during pregnancy compared to 2.9% of African American pregnant teenagers.

According to 1999 La PRAMS data, an estimated total of 7784 (12.3%) pregnant women (with live births) in Louisiana smoked during the last three months of pregnancy. Higher rates of smoking during pregnancy were observed among Whites (17.9%), women less than 20 years of age (14.5%), women with less than high school level of education (19.9%), and women who are not married (15.9%).

Smoking during pregnancy is associated with increased risks for pregnancy complications, premature rupture of membranes, and modest increase in risk for preterm delivery. Evidence shows that maternal tobacco use is associated with low birth weight, mental retardation and birth defects such as oral clefts in the newborn. Research suggests intrauterine exposure and passive exposure to secondhand smoke after pregnancy are associated with an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in infants.

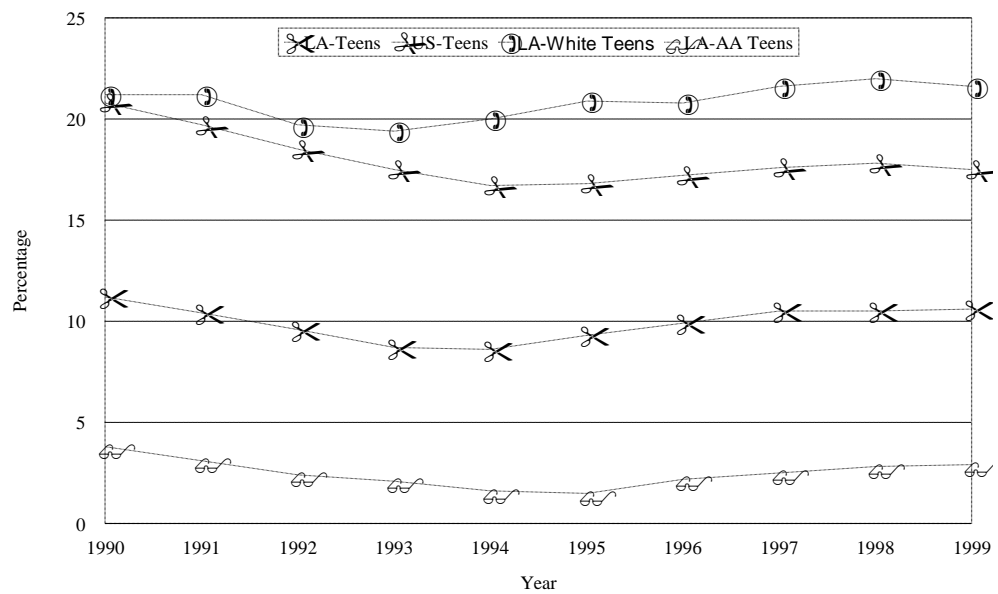
The Tobacco Control Program at the Louisiana Office of Public Health is currently involved in developing activities for increasing public awareness about the harmful effects of smoking or exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke during pregnancy and operates a quit line to help individuals who are willing to quit or need information on how to quit. For more information about quitting tobacco use please call the Toll Free help line 1-800-LUNG-USA (586-4872). Further information about quitting smoking during pregnancy can be obtained by calling the Louisiana Maternal and Child Health Program at 1-800-251-BABY (2229).

Figure I: Smoking Rates Among Pregnant Women in Louisiana – 1999.



* Source: State Center for Health Statistics

Figure II: Trends in Smoking during Pregnancy among Teenagers. (1990-99)



*Source: State Center for Health Statistics